



# GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

Master of Social Work

Student Handbook  
2024-2025

George Fox University  
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**Master of Social Work Student Handbook  
for Students Entering Fall 2024 through Summer 2025  
Revised Summer 2024**

## **Welcome!**

The faculty and staff of the Master of Social Work (MSW) at George Fox University (GFU) are glad you have decided to join our program. We look forward to working with you to reach your goal of being a master-level social worker. To that end, the Student Handbook serves as a guide for policies and procedures important for your successful completion of the MSW degree. It is vital that you read the handbook thoroughly. The policies and procedures for the MSW program have been developed through a collaborative process with interaction between faculty, administrators, advisory board members, community partners, and students. We invite you to become familiar with it and encourage any feedback you may have about clarity and process. An abbreviated list of social work and GFU student resources is provided on page 36 of this handbook to enhance visibility of such supports while enrolled in the MSW program.

## **Be Known**

As students at George Fox University, the MSW program strives to extend the Be Known promise to its graduate students. In partnership with the larger university, we make it a goal to cascade this promise in program activities and interactions. As a reminder, the Be Known promise is: At George Fox, each student will be known – personally, academically and spiritually.

## **Land Acknowledgement**

George Fox University's Newberg campus (GFU), established as Friends Pacific Academy in 1885, is built on Kalapuyan land. The Kalapuyan people are a part of The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, a federally recognized group that includes more than 30 other tribes and bands.

To find more about indigenous tribes in the Oregon area, please visit the GFU Kalapuya Guide provided by the George Fox Library at: <https://libguides.georgefox.edu/kalapuya/home>

## **Anti-Racism Statement**

At the core of social work is the commitment to social justice and transformation in practice settings. This includes social work education, where excellence is not solely measured in scholarly outcomes, but also in students' preparedness to be critically engaged change agents. In the spirit of solidarity, shared humanity, and concern for antiracist communities - both national and global - George Fox University's Master of Social Work faculty celebrate diversity, equity, and inclusion as central to our mission and affirm solidarity with those individuals and groups most socially vulnerable.

# George Fox University Master of Social Work Program

## **Master of Social Work Mission Statement**

The mission of George Fox University's Department of Social Work Master's Program is to prepare graduates for worldwide leadership and service as social work professionals who integrate the values, knowledge, and skills of social work with the highest competence and ethical integrity within public and private human service organizations, faith communities, and religiously affiliated agencies.

## **Program's Context: University's Mission**

The mission of the university is as follows: "George Fox University, a Christ-centered community, prepares students spiritually, academically, and professionally to think with clarity, act with integrity, and serve with passion."

The university mission statement is further exemplified by the institutional values that relate clearly to the mission, nature, and purposes of the master in social work program. For example:

1. Living like Christ as Agents of Love and Reconciliation
2. Creating a Transformational Learning Community
3. Pursuing Scholarly Inquiry
4. Engaging Globally and Connecting Culturally
5. Reflecting the Diversity of God's People
6. Preparing Innovators and Risk Takers in Pursuit of God's Kingdom
7. Serving and Leading in Communities of Trust
8. Promoting Peace, Justice, and Care of the Earth

Three particular themes relevant to the convergence of mission between the university and the masters' degree in social work emerge:

- Competent, ethical integration of Christian faith and the highest standards of social work scholarship and professional practice;
- Leadership in professionally-oriented, globally engaged, experientially-grounded education; and
- Commitment to justice and service.

The George Fox University Master of Social Work Program's mission statement is consistent with the profession's purpose and values as outlined in the CSWE EPAS (CSWE, 2022) and NASW Code of Ethics (NASW, 2021).

“The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice; the creation of conditions that facilitate the realization of human rights; the elimination of poverty; and the enhancement of life for all people, locally and globally” (CSWE, 2022 p. 14).

### **CSWE 2022 EPAS Standards**

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organization, and Communities

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 10: Demonstrate Ethical Integration of Religion and Spirituality with Social Work Practice (Additional Competency added by the George Fox MSW Program)

**NASW Code of Ethics**

Students of the George Fox University Master of Social Work are expected to comply with the following code:

## Summary of Ethical Principles

### *Value: Service*

Ethical Principle: Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.

### *Value: Social Justice*

Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

### *Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person*

Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

### *Value: Importance of Human Relationships*

Ethical Principle: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

### *Value: Integrity*

Ethical Principle: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

### *Value: Competence*

Ethical Principle: Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

The George Fox University Master of Social Work mission broadly addresses the preparation of competent practitioners at advanced levels of practice to serve and to lead as social work professionals intent on promoting human and community well-being. The Master program is built on the values, knowledge, and skills that undergird the purpose of the social work profession.

Consistent with the university and program mission, infused into the curriculum will be themes relating to the ethical integration of personal beliefs and competent professional practice; working effectively with diverse spiritual and religious beliefs, practices, and organizations; and meeting human needs and seeking social justice, locally, nationally, and globally.

## **Distinctives of the George Fox University Master of Social Work Program**

The Department of Social Work seeks to integrate Christian scholarship within the discipline of social work. Upon completion of the prescribed curriculum the student should be able to demonstrate mastery of the theories, methods, techniques, and values of the social work profession as prescribed by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The MSW Program identifies 4 unique pillars.

### **Pillar 1: A Compassionate, Inclusive Community**

#### *Be Welcome*

Join a community that honors your heritage, accepts you unconditionally and values what you bring to the table. Your classmates will become friends and colleagues, and your professors will amplify your passion for service. You'll emerge with confidence, a clear sense of purpose and a lifeline professional network.



## Pillar 2: Anchored in Love. Advancing Social Justice

### *Turn Love into Action*

Don't just fight for the vulnerable; walk with them and help them find their way. Hear their heart. Help them discover their worth. Be their voice when no one else is listening. And advance the cause of justice for all.

## Pillar 3: Committed to Comprehensive, Culturally Informed Care

### *Be Understanding*

Discover how diverse belief systems and social identities intersect with social work practice. The more you understand about the richness of our collective humanity, the more understanding you can be - and the better you can care for the spiritual, emotional and social needs of the clients you serve.

## Pillar 4: Unparalleled Training and Problem-Solving Focus

### *Activate Your Knowledge*

Dive into the daily lives of vulnerable populations, develop culturally informed intervention strategies and apply your knowledge in personalized practicums. Whether you're working with clients at a local nonprofit, serving students at a nearby school or providing services at a government agency, you'll lead people on a path to sustainable change.

## **Goals of the Master of Social Work Program**

Students completing the MSW program will be able, at an advanced level, to:

1. Exhibit competence in generalist and advanced social work practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
2. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in applying knowledge and ethical principles to social work practice and in evaluating scientific inquiry including practice-based research.
3. Consider and apply the values and ethics of the profession in every aspect of practice and understand the ethical integration of Christian faith in practice, including nondiscrimination in the areas of age, class, culture, color, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
4. Enhance the well-being of people and communities locally, regionally, nationally, and around the world.
5. Apply an ecological systems perspective, empirically supported theoretical frameworks, and evidence-based social work practice methods to all levels of practice.

## **Social Work Program Nondiscrimination Policy**

All students who meet the minimum requirements for admission to the Master of Social Work Program at George Fox University are invited to apply, and no student will be denied admission on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, age, marital or veteran status, disability, religion, political affiliation or sexual orientation. As professional social workers upholding the values of ADEI, the MSW program takes very seriously any concerns of

discrimination, harassment, threats to safety, and purposeful intent to harm others in our program and community. **All students are expected to follow the standards set forth in the University Standards of Conduct.**

### **Conduct**

In addition, it is the policy of George Fox University that all employees and students work in an environment where the dignity of each individual is respected. Harassment due to race, color, sex, marital status, religion, creed, age, national origin, citizenship status, political affiliation, workers' compensation status, physical or mental disability, veteran's status, or any other status protected under applicable local, state or federal law is prohibited. Engaging in such behavior will not be tolerated and may result in corrective action, up to and including dismissal.

*Inquiries about the [University Discrimination, Bias and Harassment Policy](#) may be directed to the University Department of Human Resources.*

### **Program Accreditation**

Students frequently ask us if the Social Work Program is accredited. It is important to understand that there are **two** different types of accreditation that affect the Social Work Program. The regional accrediting body, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), grants the first type of accreditation. *This regional body reviews entire universities* and programs for the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

A second type of accreditation is **professional** accreditation. Professional accreditation is granted in social work through the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The George Fox University MSW Program is fully accredited by CSWE and awards the Master in Social Work (MSW) degree upon graduation. As of March 2023, the MSW program has been fully reaffirmed by CSWE for eight years ending in October 2028.

### **State Licensure as a Social Worker**

In most cases, social work licensure exams can only be taken by students who have graduated from a CSWE accredited program. Licensure at the master's level varies state by state. The State of Oregon has three different categories for licenses at the master's level. These include Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Clinical Social Work Associate (CSWA), and Licensed Master of Social Work (LMSW). Detailed information for each license can be found at the following website: [www.oregon.gov/BLSW](http://www.oregon.gov/BLSW).

The program provides a full faith effort in preparing graduates of the MSW program for opportunities for licensure. Further information regarding licensure in Oregon as well as jurisdictions outside of Oregon can be found on the MSW program website at: <https://www.georgefox.edu/socialwork/career/social-worker-oregon.html>.

## **MSW Program Curriculum**

The George Fox University Master of Social Work Program builds its curriculum upon a solid liberal arts foundation. It is designed to facilitate the acquisition and integration of knowledge, skills, and ethics in order to form a foundation for lifelong learning.

The MSW program is designed to be an advanced generalist training program. It consists of the foundation courses, known as generalist. The specialization courses are known as advanced generalist. The generalist MSW courses are structured to provide all students with a set of common values, generalist skills, and knowledge base about the social work profession, human behavior and the social environment, conceptual and practice theories (e.g., trauma-informed, ecological systems theory, developmental theory, strengths perspective), research and statistics, values and ethics, diversity, policy, and social work practice. The content of the generalist curriculum and advanced generalist curriculum are then applied to practice through practicums.

The advanced standing curriculum is designed for students who have a baccalaureate degree in social work (BSW) from a CSWE accredited program and meet all of the requirements of admission for advanced standing. The advanced standing curriculum consists of 32 semester credit hours. The advanced standing (advanced generalist curriculum) is designed to build on the curriculum of the bachelors of social work.

The majority of accredited MSW programs have a particular focus or specialization. Our focus is in advanced generalist training. Our advanced generalist curriculum aims to provide students with an advanced understanding of generalist approaches to social work practice. Advanced Generalist courses allow students to develop a broad base of knowledge and skills while enrolling in elective coursework. Advanced generalist social work embraces the idea that micro and macro social work are two necessary halves of the same whole by preparing students to perform advanced responsibilities in both types of social work. Advanced generalist social workers have similar job titles to those of their peers in micro and macro social work, with the main difference being the degree to which they work in both micro and macro social work, relative to social workers who work primarily in one discipline or the other.

This level of flexibility can be highly advantageous for students who want a broad and diverse skills set. Students should keep in mind that, in order to get the most out of their advanced generalist curriculum, they should plan their program of study, particularly their electives and selection of practicum education site to ensure their selections prepare them for their desired work post-graduation. For example, students may complete practicum education hours in settings that give them training in both micro-level social work practice and macro-level program development.

Advanced generalist social work practice requires that the social worker integrate knowledge about psychological and developmental theories, practice approaches, social policies, and political action. Advanced generalist social work practice could be called integrative social work practice. The breadth inherent in viewing problems and solutions from multiple perspectives is a benefit. The action of combining them into an intervention also is a benefit.

Advanced generalist curriculum will still provide a pathway into licensure, but students should determine the licensing requirements for the state in which they intend to practice for further clarification.

The following three pages are designed for student use in charting their course through the program and understanding graduation requirements. Course descriptions can be found in the [graduate course catalog online](#).

## Master of Social Work Traditional Program

Catalog Year 2024-25

It is your responsibility to ensure that your degree and licensing requirements are met. Your academic advisor is available to help you. Please meet with your academic advisor at least once per academic year to ensure you are on track. \*Any deviations from the curriculum plan outlined below must be approved by an academic advisor.

| Accelerated                                  |         |  |         | Standard                               |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |
|--|---------|--|---------|--|---------|--|---------|--|---------|--|---------|
| Year One                                     |         | Year Two                                     |         | Year One                               |         | Year Two                                     |         | Year Three                             |         | Year Four                                    |         |
| <b>Fall semester</b>                         | Credits | <b>Fall semester</b>                         | Credits | <b>Fall Semester</b>                   | Credits | <b>Fall Semester</b>                         | Credits | <b>Fall Semester</b>                   | Credits | <b>Fall Semester</b>                         | Credits |
| SWKG 520                                     | 3       | SWKG 601                                     | 3       | SWKG 520                               | 3       | SWKG 576                                     | 3       | SWKG 601                               | 3       | SWKG 601                                     | 3       |
| SWKG 533                                     | 3       | SWKG 605                                     | 3       | SWKG 533                               | 3       | SWKG 591                                     | 3       | SWKG 605                               | 3       | SWKG 605                                     | 3       |
| SWKG 570                                     | 3       | SWKG 647                                     | 2       | SWKG 570                               | 3       |  |         | SWKG 685                               | 2       | SWKG 685                                     | 2       |
| SWKG 576                                     | 3       | SWKG 676                                     | 4       | <i>Total Credits 9</i>                 |         | <i>Total Credits 6</i>                       |         | <i>Total Credits 8</i>                 |         | <i>Total Credits 8</i>                       |         |
| SWKG 591                                     | 3       | SWKG 685                                     | 2       |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |
|  |         | SWKG 685                                     | 2       |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |
| <i>Total Credits 15</i>                      |         | <i>Total Credits 16</i>                      |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |
| <b>Spring Semester</b>                       |         | <b>Spring Semester</b>                       |         | <b>Spring Semester</b>                 |         | <b>Spring Semester</b>                       |         | <b>Spring Semester</b>                 |         | <b>Spring Semester</b>                       |         |
| SWKG 521                                     | 2       | SWKG 606                                     | 3       | SWKG 521                               | 2       | SWKG 577                                     | 3       | SWKG 606                               | 3       | SWKG 606                                     | 3       |
| SWKG 542                                     | 3       | SWKG 607                                     | 3       | SWKG 542                               | 3       | SWKG 592                                     | 3       | SWKG 607                               | 3       | SWKG 607                                     | 3       |
| SWKG 560                                     | 3       | SWKG 648                                     | 2       | SWKG 560                               | 3       | SWKG 596                                     | 1       | SWKG 685                               | 2       | SWKG 685                                     | 2       |
| SWKG 577                                     | 3       | SWKG 677                                     | 4       | <i>Total Credits 8</i>                 |         | <i>Total Credits 7</i>                       |         | <i>Total Credits 8</i>                 |         | <i>Total Credits 8</i>                       |         |
| SWKG 592                                     | 3       | SWKG 685                                     | 2       |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |
| SWKG 596                                     | 1       | SWKG 699                                     | 2       |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |
| <i>Total Credits 15</i>                      |         | <i>Total Credits 16</i>                      |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |
| <b>One 8 month practicum (16 hours/week)</b> |         | <b>One 8 month practicum (20 hours/week)</b> |         | <b>No practicum during first year.</b> |         | <b>One 8 month practicum (16 hours/week)</b> |         | <b>No practicum during third year.</b> |         | <b>One 8 month practicum (20 hours/week)</b> |         |

For the 2024-25 academic year courses are held in person at the Portland Center campus with a limited number of online course offerings. Practicum is completed on site at a local agency for a total of 224 hours per semester.

**Grades:**

- A passing grade for Practicum consists of "B"(83) or better, and for all other courses a "C" (73) or better.
- A passing grade must be earned in order to take the second course in any sequenced course (e.g. Practice I and Practice II) as well as to move into the advanced generalist curriculum of the program and meet graduation requirements.
- All MSW students must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA in order to be in good academic standing.
- Traditional students may not earn more than two "C" (73) grades throughout their degree plan.
- Advanced Standing students may not earn more than one "C" (73) grade throughout their degree plan.

Notes:

## Master of Social Work Advanced Standing Program

Catalog Year 2024-25

It is your responsibility to ensure that your degree and licensing requirements are met. Your academic advisor is available to help you. Please meet with your academic advisor at least once per academic year to ensure you are on track. \*Any deviations from the curriculum plan outlined below must be approved by an academic advisor.

| Accelerated                                  |           | Standard                               |          |  |          |
|--|-----------|--|----------|--|----------|
| Year One - 2024-2025                         |           | Year One - 2024-2025                   |          | Year Two - 2025-2026                         |          |
| Fall semester                                | Credits   | Fall Semester                          | Credits  | Fall Semester                                | Credits  |
| SWKG 601                                     | 3         | SWKG 601                               | 3        | SWKG 647                                     | 2        |
| SWKG 605                                     | 3         | SWKG 605                               | 3        | SWKG 676                                     | 4        |
| SWKG 647                                     | 2         | SWKG 685                               | 2        | SWKG 685                                     | 2        |
| SWKG 676                                     | 4         | <i>Total Credits</i>                   | <i>8</i> | <i>Total Credits</i>                         | <i>8</i> |
| SWKG 685                                     | 2         |  |          |  |          |
| SWKG 685                                     | 2         |  |          |  |          |
| <i>Total Credits</i>                         | <i>16</i> |  |          |  |          |
| Spring Semester                              |           | Spring Semester                        |          | Spring Semester                              |          |
| SWKG 606                                     | 3         | SWKG 606                               | 3        | SWKG 648                                     | 2        |
| SWKG 607                                     | 3         | SWKG 607                               | 3        | SWKG 677                                     | 4        |
| SWKG 648                                     | 2         | SWKG 685                               | 2        | SWKG 699                                     | 2        |
| SWKG 677                                     | 4         | <i>Total Credits</i>                   | <i>8</i> | <i>Total Credits</i>                         | <i>8</i> |
| SWKG 685                                     | 2         |  |          |  |          |
| SWKG 699                                     | 2         |  |          |  |          |
| <i>Total Credits</i>                         | <i>16</i> |  |          |  |          |
| <b>One 8 month practicum (20 hours/week)</b> |           | <b>No Practicum during first year.</b> |          | <b>One 8 month practicum (20 hours/week)</b> |          |

For the 2024-25 academic year courses are held in person at the Portland Center campus with a limited number of online course offerings. Practicum is completed on site at a local agency for a total of 224 hours per semester. Starting Fall 2025 courses will be online.

**Grades:**

- A passing grade for Practicum consists of "B"(83) or better, and for all other courses a "C" (73) or better.
- A passing grade must be earned in order to take the second course in any sequenced course (e.g. Practice I and Practice II) as well as to move into the advanced generalist curriculum of the program and meet graduation requirements.
- All MSW students must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA in order to be in good academic standing.
- Traditional students may not earn more than two "C" (73) grades throughout their degree plan.
- Advanced Standing students may not earn more than one "C" (73) grade throughout their degree plan.

Notes:



**Master of Social Work**  
**Graduation Checklist**  
Catalog Year 2024-2025

It is ultimately **your responsibility** to ensure that your degree requirements are met. Your academic advisor and the registrar office enrollment manager are available to help you. Please meet with your academic advisor at least once per academic year to ensure you are on track. The following specifications must be satisfied in order to be considered eligible for graduation.

- Complete all 62 credits (Traditional program) or 32 credits (Advanced Standing program) as outlined in the course curriculum plan above.
- Completion of at least 448 hours of generalist practicum placement (Traditional program students only)
- Completion of at least 560 hours of advanced generalist practicum placement
- A minimum grade point of 3.0
- Completion of program exit survey
- Application for graduation submitted to registrar (Due January of the last semester)

## **Master of Social Work Faculty**

The people who compose the faculty of the George Fox University Master of Social Work Program bring a rich mixture of professional and teaching experience to their tasks. A sample of their experience and interests is noted below.

### **Yongqiang Zheng, PhD, MSW**

Program Director, Associate Professor of Social Work

Yongqiang spent five years (2007-12) as a lecturer and one as an assistant professor (2006-07) in the Department of Social Work, School of Law at Shandong University of Finance and Economics. In addition to his two degrees from the University of Louisville, he holds both a master of arts in sociology degree (2006) and a bachelor's degree in sociology (2000) from Shandong University in China.

#### **Education**

Ph.D., Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky

MSW, Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky

MA, Sociology, Shandong University, China

B.A. in Sociology, Shandong University, China

### **Rhonda Andrews, MSW, LCSW**

Director of Practicum Education, Associate Professor of Social Work

Rhonda is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Registered Play Therapist and holds a Post-Graduate Certificate in Adoption Therapy. As a young social worker, she worked for Child Protective Services in Hawaii and Oregon. She became passionate about adoption when she worked for International Family Services, conducting home studies for adoptive families. Rhonda has taught as an adjunct professor in the Social Work Department at GFU since 2000, and has taught a variety of the BSW courses. Since 2006, Rhonda has had a private counseling practice, where she specializes in Play Therapy and working with adoptive families. Rhonda joined the GFU faculty full-time in fall 2015.

#### **Education**

MSW, University of Hawaii, Manoa, Hawaii

B.S, Sociology, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon

A.A, Criminal Justice, Lane Community College, Eugene, Oregon

### **Daphne Vaughn, MSW**

Assistant Professor of Social Work

Daphne graduated with her Master of Social Work degree in 2001 from California State University of Long Beach. Prior to that time she spent many years working with youth in residential settings. After graduating with her MSW, she worked for eight years with foster children, and families hoping to adopt children out of foster care. After that, she worked another eight years with families who had children in Head Start. Throughout her work experiences she developed a passion for, and expertise in, parent education to promote attachment and healthy parenting.



During the Fall of 2018, she began teaching as an adjunct for the Social and Behavioral Sciences Major in George Fox's Adult Degree Program and then transitioned to teaching in the Social Work Program, at both the BSW and MSW levels. Daphne also earned a Bachelors in Psychology from the University of California, Davis (1995), where she was a research assistant in the area of learning and memory. She also enjoys spending time camping, hiking, gardening, and visiting family.

### **Education**

MSW, California State University, Long Beach  
B.S., Psychology, University of California, Davis

**Jeongah Kim, PhD, MPA, BSW**  
Associate Professor of Social Work

Dr. Kim has taught social work in public and private universities since 2003. She has taught HBSE, social work values and ethics, social welfare policy, diversity issues, spirituality and social work, and research. She strives to expand students' horizons outward to understand and improve the human condition and prepare them to be actively engaged in our complex and diverse local and global community. Research has been an important part of her overarching effort to serve people. The major motive for her scholarship is to pursue truth and seek to apply it authentically to today's world. This motivation manifests itself in the task of stimulating deep-thinking and critical reflection with regard to social work values and ethics through the examination of various contemporary social issues. A similar yet distinct second task that she has embraced is to bridge the two cultures of science and faith that encourages others to be more interested in the proper integration of religion and social work practice. She has demonstrated a sustained pattern of research throughout her career, including: (1) More than 30 scholarly publications (e.g. Social Welfare, CSWE) and grants (e.g. USDA, TRT), (2) 62 scholarly presentations (e.g. APM, SSWR), (3) Appointment as a Health Equity Council Member (DHHS), and (4) An academic reputation evidenced by being invited to serve as a peer reviewer for three reputable journals (Journal of African American Studies, Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, and Social Work and Christianity).

### **Education**

Ph.D., Ohio State University;  
M. A. in Public Administration, Eastern Washington University;  
BA in Social Work, Seoul Theological University

**Steffanie Altenbern, DHSc, LMSW**  
Assistant Professor of Social Work

Steffanie Altenbern worked the three years previous as an assistant professor of social work at Northwest Nazarene University, teaching social work micro and macro practice and field courses. In addition, she was an adjunct professor at Spring Arbor University, teaching social work courses to distance learning students. Previously, Altenbern was a homeless liaison for the Nampa School District in Nampa, Idaho, responsible for the homeless caseload in the Title I school district (2016-18). She also gained social work experience as a community prevention specialist with the Prevention Management Organization, building relationships to influence community change

around substance abuse, tobacco and suicide. Altenbern earned a doctor of health science degree from Eastern Virginia Medical School in 2022 and also holds a master of social work from the Metropolitan State College of Denver (2012) and a bachelor's degree in social work from Spring Arbor University.

### **Education**

Doctor of Health Science, Eastern Virginia Medical School  
MSW, Metropolitan State College of Denver

### **Adjunct Faculty**

Additional adjunct professors are contracted in their areas of practical and academic expertise as needed by school enrollments.

Adjunct Faculty Serving During the 2024-2025 Academic Year include:

Leslie Wuest, PhD, LCSW  
Roslyn Wilde, LCSW  
Anna Maceira, LCSW

Rebecca Rodriguez, PhD, LCSW  
Kathryn Saunders, LMSW

## **Admissions Criteria**

### **Minimum Admissions Requirements**

The graduate program requires that all applicants have either a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in the United States or proof of equivalent education at an international institution of higher learning.

Applicants are expected to have a record of undergraduate study and experience that is predictive of success in graduate study.

A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 for the traditional program. Applicants must have completed all the prerequisite courses with a minimum GPA of 2.75 prior to entry to the program.

A satisfactory grade point average in and of itself does not guarantee admission to a graduate program. The graduate admissions committee considers approval for admission after the assessment and review processes are concluded. The applicant will be expected to complete all undergraduate prerequisites prior to entry in the program.

Prerequisite baccalaureate coursework that demonstrates a strong liberal arts background is required. Courses in the following areas are required:

Statistics: (one course)

While other specific prerequisite courses are not required, ideally applicants will have completed a minimum of one course from each of the following categories:

Social and behavioral sciences (two courses preferred)

Natural science and mathematics

Humanities and arts

Acceptable performance on a writing assessment, demonstrating ability to think critically and communicate effectively and clearly in writing.

Statement of professional interest in MSW graduate study at George Fox University and support of the stated mission of GFU's MSW program.

Self-statement that there is no pre-existing criminal record or disclosure of any criminal record, and that there is no physical or mental impairment, which would preclude licensure as a professional social worker.

Profile of all the above criteria which demonstrates commitment to social work values and potential for growth toward skilled, competent, advanced level social work practice.

Willingness to participate in a file review and in MSW Ignite provides additional interaction and engagement with faculty.

U.S. citizens and eligible non-citizens may apply for federal financial aid by completing a

FAFSA at [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov). Additional financial aid resources can be found on our [Graduate Student Financial Aid page](#).

A student desiring admission to the graduate program must complete the application process, even if another graduate degree has been earned at George Fox University.

### **Traditional Program**

Admission to the Master of Social Work program is conducted by formal application. All students who meet the minimum requirements for admission to the Master of Social Work Program at George Fox University are invited to apply, and no student will be denied admission on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, age, marital or veteran status, disability, religion, political affiliation or sexual orientation.

The applicant's packet will be considered complete when the following parts have been received:

1. A completed online application and an official transcript from each junior college, college, or university in which baccalaureate coursework was taken.
2. References: Two professional and/or academic references who can attest to and rate the applicant's ability in these areas: intellectual competence; potential for academic success; the ability to work with people around sensitive issues, including people from diverse backgrounds; possession of critical thinking and communication skills; a sense of values and ethics; and potential as a professional social worker.
  - Applicants who are fewer than five years from completing a bachelor's degree: One academic reference and one professional reference.
  - Applications who are five years or more from completing a bachelor's degree: Two professional references.

Recommenders must submit these directly to the Master of Social Work program through the web link provided by the applicant. If a letter is included, the letters must be written on institutional or business letterhead.

3. Professional resume. The resume should include both experience in social work-related positions and non-social work-related positions. Please indicate whether positions were full-time or part-time and the length of time in a position.
4. Essay: A two page / 500 word statement of purpose which addresses your readiness for graduate work, what influenced your decision to pursue a MSW and your professional goals.
5. Sample of scholarly writing from applicant's undergraduate program. Examples include an academic research paper, literature review, report, etc. If scholarly writing is not available, please contact the admissions counselor for an alternate option.

## **Advanced Standing Admissions Criteria**

Students who have a baccalaureate degree in social work from George Fox University, as well as students who have earned a baccalaureate degree in social work from another program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, may apply for admission into Advanced Standing at George Fox University. If admitted, full time students can complete their MSW by taking 32 credit hours of graduate work.

Applicants to the GFU Advanced Standing Program with a degree from an international social work program must provide evidence through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service that the program from which they have graduated or anticipate graduating is certified by CSWE.

Preference will be given to admitting to Advanced Standing those students who completed their baccalaureate degrees no more than five years prior to application. If students completed their baccalaureate degree in social work more than five years before applying to the MSW program, they must demonstrate that they have engaged in continuing education and professional social work practice during a majority of the years since their baccalaureate education. Decisions about applicants' admission to Advanced Standing will be based on the following, in addition to the standard graduate social work application:

An overall grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale, a grade point average of 3.0 or higher in all social work coursework, to include a minimum grade of B in all practice and practicum courses.

The applicant's packet will be considered complete when the following parts have been received:

1. A completed online application and an official transcript from each junior college, college, or university in which baccalaureate coursework was taken.
2. Completion of the undergraduate degree no more than five years prior to application. (Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis for social workers who have been in practice with regular continuing education.)
3. References: One professional and one academic reference who can attest to and rate the applicant's ability in these areas: intellectual competence; potential for academic success; the ability to work with people around sensitive issues, including people from diverse backgrounds; possession of critical thinking and communication skills; a sense of values and ethics; and potential as a professional social worker.
  - One academic reference from either the undergraduate program director or practicum faculty. If your BSW program director or practicum faculty are no longer available or would not be able to write a knowledgeable reference on your behalf, you may seek a reference from another faculty member within your BSW Program.
  - One professional reference

Recommenders must submit these directly to the Master of Social Work program through the web link provided by the applicant. If a letter is included, the letters must be written on institutional or business letterhead.

4. Professional resume. The resume should include both experience in social work-related positions and non-social work-related positions. Please indicate whether positions were full-time or part-time and the length of time in a position.
5. Essay: A two page / 500 word statement of purpose which addresses your readiness for graduate work, what influenced your decision to pursue a MSW and your professional goals.
6. Sample of scholarly writing from applicant's undergraduate program. Examples include an academic research paper, literature review, report, etc. If scholarly writing is not available, please contact the admissions counselor for an alternate option.
7. A copy of the practicum evaluation from the baccalaureate social work practicum experience(s) documenting satisfactory generalist practice experience and skills in the internship. (While prospective students may be admitted conditionally based on their performance in the practicum, full admission is contingent upon receipt of final practicum evaluation. When the final practicum evaluation is not available, a positive reference from a social work supervisor familiar with the applicant's skills in social work practice is necessary.)

#### **School Social Work Licensure Prep Program Admissions Criteria**

Applicants can complete the school social work licensure prep program as part of the MSW program without taking any extra courses or taking longer to finish their master's degree. The admission criteria is the same as listed above.

Applicants that already have their MSW from a CSWE-accredited program will apply to the stand-alone school social work licensure prep program. Applicants must meet the following criteria to be considered:

1. A MSW degree from a program accredited by the CSWE. No other degree or life experience can be substituted for this requirement.
2. Official transcript from earned MSW degree
3. Two professional references
4. Professional resume including experience related to social work
5. Essay: A two-page, 500-word statement of purpose which addresses what prompted your interest in becoming a school social worker and what experiences you've had that prepare you for this profession.

#### **Process and Procedures for Evaluating Applications and Notifying Applicants of Decisions**

Applicants for the traditional program are evaluated based on the admissions criteria specified in the previous section. Applicants for the advanced standing program are evaluated on the criteria specified in the previous section.

Once an applicant's file is completed it is assigned to a social work faculty member for review and is rated based on academic records, writing ability, work and volunteer experience, and

references. Applicants will also be invited for an interview with a faculty member and engagement in the MSW Ignite Event.

The MSW program's letter of admission constitutes the University's official notification of the admission decision. Admitted students will have a maximum of one year from the date of admission within which to enroll. Attempts to enroll after the one-year period will require completion of another application. The University reserves the right to refuse admission to any applicant whose previous academic record and/or readiness for graduate study in social work is deemed unsatisfactory.

### **Transfer of Credit Policy**

For matriculating students who wish to transfer from another CSWE accredited graduate social work program, the MSW program has a written policy stipulating the transfer of credits as follows. For students requesting to transfer credits from graduate programs not accredited by CSWE, courses will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Director of the Master of Social Work program, in consultation with MSW faculty, may approve up to 15 hours of coursework for inclusion into the MSW traditional program or up to 9 hours of coursework in the advanced standing program. In order to preserve the integrity of their education at the degree granting institution; practicum credits will not be transferred.

The conditions outlined below for transfer credit consideration must be met regardless of the institution's accrediting body.

No credit will be given toward required MSW courses unless the following conditions apply:

The courses were taken in a graduate program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or in a graduate program accredited by one of the regional accrediting organizations. If the courses were NOT taken in a graduate program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, however, they meet the MSW program requirements through the program director and faculty's evaluation.

A course description and syllabus are available and the Director judges the courses to be an appropriate substitution for a specific course in the graduate program.

Once the Director has advised the student concerning which courses are approved for transfer credit, an academic plan will be provided for the student file, specifying how the transferred credits apply to the degree plan.

A petition for transfer credit must fulfill the conditions listed below:

Students who wish to transfer credits must make the request and present relevant syllabi and transcripts six (6) weeks prior to the beginning of the first semester of matriculation.

The work must have been done while the student was enrolled in good standing as a graduate student.

The work must have been done within five years prior to the award of the master's degree from George Fox University.

The school from which the credits are transferred must be accredited by a regional accreditation agency.

No earned grade for transfer credit is less than a “B” (83).

None of the transfer coursework consists of extension or workshop courses.

Petition for transfer of credit occurs after acceptance into the Department of Social Work graduate program.

A student may not use a course from a previous degree to count in their MSW degree completion. This is also in accordance with the University’s policy on credit for transfer graduate work.

For matriculating students who wish to transfer credit from an accredited graduate program that is not social work, the MSW program has a written policy stipulating the transfer of such credits as follows.

Students who seek to transfer credits from another graduate program must make the request and present relevant syllabi and transcripts at least six (6) weeks prior to the beginning of the first semester of matriculation.

The work must have been done while the student was enrolled in good standing as a graduate student.

The work must have been done within five years prior to the award of the master’s degree from George Fox University.

The school from which the credits are transferred must be accredited by a regional accreditation agency.

No earned grade for transfer is less than a “B”(83).

None of the transfer coursework consists of extension or workshop courses.

Petition for transfer of credit occurs after enrollment in the Department of Social Work graduate program.

Students may only transfer a maximum of six (6) semester units, or two (2) courses to replace one (1) elective course and/or one (1) research course.

### **Life Experience Course Credit**

The Master of Social Work Program does not grant credit for either life or work experience in lieu of any required social work courses or practicum.



## Academic and Professional Advising

Each student in the George Fox University Master of Social Work is assigned an academic advisor who is a member of the graduate faculty; students are introduced to the faculty advisor at orientation. It is strongly recommended that MSW students follow the program provided plan of study, to ensure completion of all degree requirements ahead of the intended graduation date. Any deviations from this standard degree plan should be made in consultation with the academic advisor and approved by the advisor and program director. Advisors are available to students during office hours and by appointment, where matters pertaining to academic, personal, and professional issues may be discussed with the advisor. Students are required to meet with their academic advisor prior to enrolling in spring term courses.

As developing advanced practitioners, students may benefit from the assistance and counsel of a social work advisor. The goals of advisors include, but are not limited to:

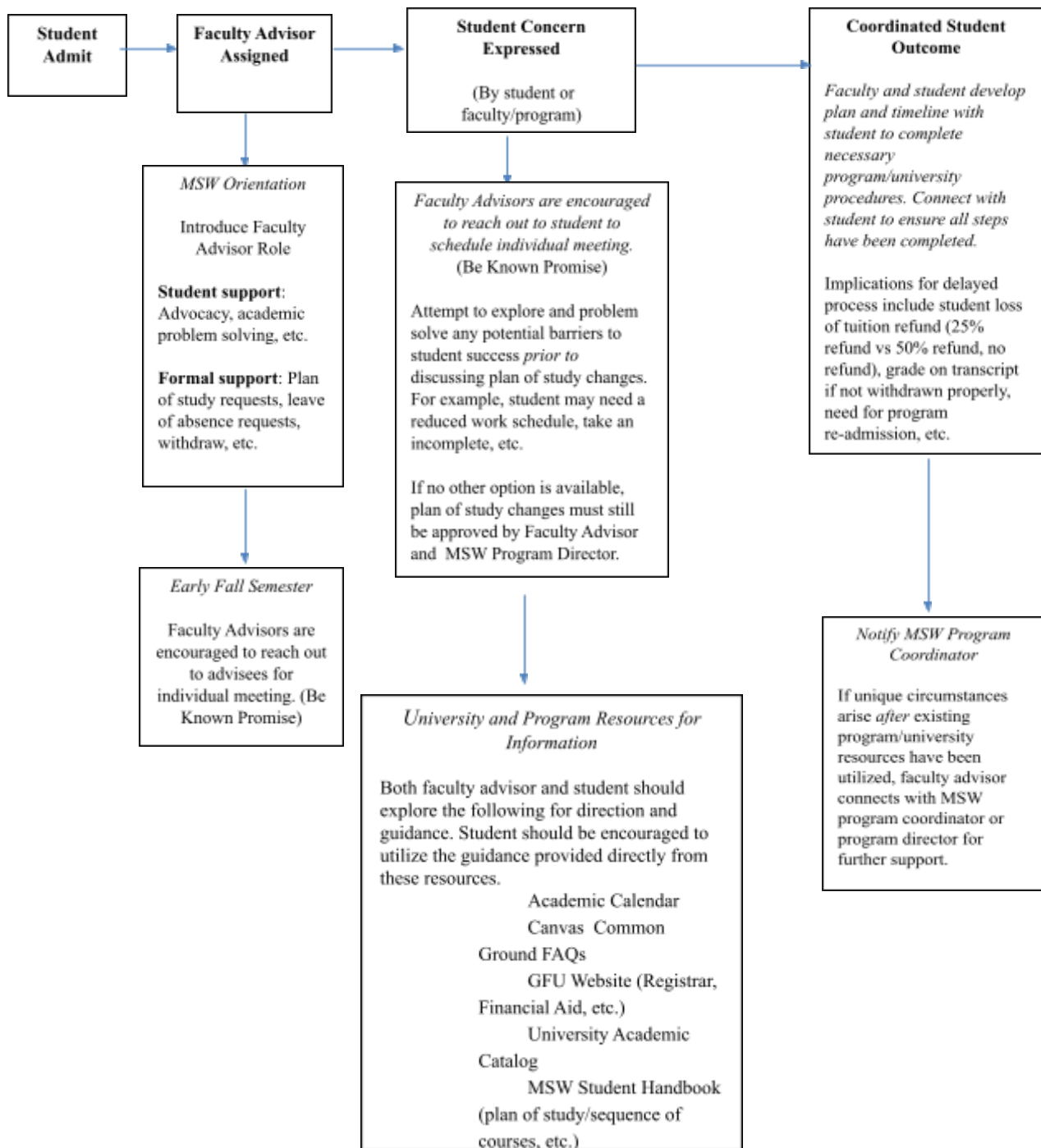
1. Providing role modeling in the area of social work values and professionalism.
2. Providing academic guidance (e.g. course selection, preparation for practice and serving as a broker to link students to needed services).
3. Providing for regular review of the student's academic performance.

Advisors will assist students in meeting all George Fox University and degree requirements, but **the student is ultimately responsible** for completing all requirements and for knowledge regarding any and all requirements of the degree.

The role of advisor is not a therapeutic one. Faculty members do not provide personal counseling to social work students, since this could easily place faculty in a situation of dual-role conflict. It is department policy to refer students needing personal counseling to other resources. The NASW Code of Ethics (2021) clearly states that “social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students’ performance in a manner that is fair and respectful” and they should “not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students.” “Social work educators or field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.” (pps. 21-22). It is with this guidance that students shall be encouraged to seek counseling outside of the program if a more therapeutic need exists.

The below chart illustrates the design of academic and professional advising in the MSW program.

## MSW Graduate Advisor Role



## **Academic and Professional Performance**

Academic and professional performance is seen as an extension of professional values and ethics as a developing social worker. Our efforts to meet the Be Known promise are contingent on student engagement, staying connected with advisors and program staff through university email, Canvas and other program platforms for communication. The following are important steps to ensuring the demonstration of sound academic and professional performance while in the MSW program. [The professionalism rubric](#) is embedded in all MSW courses to ensure continuity in the assessment of professionalism in the program. Please use this guide as a framework for understanding professionalism expectations and explicit examples of how it will be assessed while enrolled in the MSW program. Procedures for due process are outlined in the following pages to ensure students have all the available resources for advocacy.

### **Academic Performance**

As noted earlier in this document (pps. 10-12), academic performance includes the following requirements for academic success:

#### **Generalist Students**

- A passing grade for practicum seminar consists of "B"(83%) or better, and for all other courses a "C" (73%) or better. A passing grade must be earned in order to take the second course in any sequenced courses (e.g. SWKG 591 and SWKG 592) as well as to move into the advanced generalist portion of the program and meet graduation requirements.
- All MSW students must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA in order to be in good academic standing.
- Traditional students may not earn more than two "C" (73%) grades throughout their degree plan.

#### **Advanced Generalist/Advanced Standing Students**

- A passing grade for practicum seminar consists of "B"(83%) or better, and for all other courses a "C" (73%) or better. A passing grade must be earned in order to take the second course in any sequenced courses (e.g. SWKG 647 and SWKG 648) and in order to qualify for graduation.
- All MSW students must earn a minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA in order to remain in good academic standing and meet graduation requirements.
- Traditional students may not earn more than two "C" (73%) grades throughout their degree plan.
- Advanced Standing students may not earn more than one "C" (73%) grade throughout their degree plan.

### **Grade Appeal Process**

The program follows university policy. More information can be found in the [University Academic Handbook](#).

## **Procedures for Complaints, Appeal Procedures, and Grievance Policy**

George Fox University's Master of Social Work has established complaint procedures, an appeal process, and grievance policies governing academic and professional matters. These policies and procedures outline general rules regarding what issues may be appealed and the procedure to be followed for filing a grievance. Academic actions can be appealed to appropriate university authorities and an Academic Appeals Board. Appeals are taken to be good faith actions that request reexamination of academic decisions. All appeals must be made within limited time frames depending upon the action being appealed. Additional information is available in the Academic Affairs Office.

### **Overview of Complaint Procedures**

**Informal Complaint Procedures:** It is the wish of the University to provide an education and services of high quality to its students and to provide equity and harmony in the application of policies and procedures. When a student has a complaint, the University encourages resolution to be sought through informal communication with the appropriate instructor, college dean, staff member, or administrative officer who may be able to help rectify or clarify the situation before a written complaint is initiated.

**Formal Complaint Procedures:** This complaint policy does not supersede specific policies involving special cases such as grade appeals, sexual harassment, etc. that are further defined in the Student Handbook, Catalog, Graduate Policies or elsewhere.

Similarly, it does not supersede our financial policies which include "The Removal of Institutional Charges and Removal of Financial Aid Policies" and the financial appeals process. (See procedures for submitting a "Medical / Hardship Appeal" online on the Student Account web pages).

**Lodging a Formal Student Complaint:** A student who wishes to lodge a formal complaint with the University must complete and submit the formal complaint form to the appropriate Director, Dean, or Vice President. A form is available in the Office of Student Life and Office of Academic Affairs, as well as online. ([General Student Complaint Procedures](#))

**Administrative Complaint Acknowledgment:** Formal student complaints will be forwarded to the administrator most immediately responsible for the area to which the complaint pertains. Generally, the administrator will send a written acknowledgment to the student within five working days of receiving the complaint indicating that: (1) the formal complaint form has been received, (2) the nature of the complaint, and (3) that the student will receive a written response after deliberation within fifteen working days. (Please note that response time may be longer over the summer or holidays or when there are extenuating circumstances, for example, if the administrator is away on vacation or for some other reason). Copies of the written student complaint and the acknowledgement letter will be sent to the Director, Dean, or Vice President over that area.

**Administrative Deliberation and Response:** If the administrator to whom the complaint is

forwarded determines that the nature of the complaint is beyond their area of supervision or expertise, the next level administrator in the area should be consulted and may be requested to respond to the student. Administrative disposition of the complaint will generally consist of investigation into the source of the complaint, previous efforts to resolve the issue, and any contingencies that will aid in the deliberation and disposition of the problem. The responding administrator will send to the student a written statement of attempted resolution to the problem. A copy of the deliberation response will be sent to the appropriate Director, Dean, or Vice President. All formal student complaints will be forwarded upon resolution to the Vice President for Student Life's office where a log will be kept.

**Student Appeal Process:** Upon receiving a deliberation response to the written complaint, the student has the right of appeal to successive levels of administrators within the area. **This appeal must be made in writing within five working days of receiving the Administrative response.** In each case, the student will generally receive an acknowledgement of the appeal within five working days upon receipt of the complaint and a deliberation response within fifteen working days from the date of the acknowledgment letter. (Please note that response time may be longer over the summer or holidays or when there are extenuating circumstances, for example, if the administrator is away on vacation for some other reason).

## **Criteria for Possible Dismissal from the MSW Program at George Fox University and Student Appeal Procedure**

### **1. The George Fox University Policy on Academic Honesty**

It is assumed that all students at George Fox University will endeavor to be honest and of high integrity in all matters pertaining to university life. A lack of respect and integrity is evidenced by cheating, fabricating, plagiarizing, misuse of keys and facilities, removing books and other property not one's own, defacing and altering property, and disrupting classes.

Cheating is defined as intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. It is assumed that whatever work is submitted is the student's own work and is new work for that course. Fabrication is defined as intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise or form. Plagiarism is defined as representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. One who facilitates any of the above is equally responsible with the primary violator. George Fox University has a policy on AI language tools to clarify the role these tools should and should not play in a student's academic work.

Penalties may include restitution, a failing grade on an individual paper or exam, loss of campus position or employment, a failing grade for the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, or dismissal. The Office of Academic Affairs handles academic dishonesty issues in conjunction with the Office of Student Life.

## **2. Dismissal of a Student from the Social Work Program – Academic Issues**

The following are university policies guiding academic warning, probation, suspension and dismissal. The MSW program will routinely review student academic status in consultation with the university registrar and engage with students and/or academic advisors to remediate academic performance. Academic remediation plans may be initiated in consultation with a student's academic advisor to support the student in achieving academic success. Remedial actions may include, but are not limited to, additional courses, meetings with academic advisor, or additional activities that support the student in remediating academic performance.

### **Academic Warning**

Whenever the GPA for a given semester is below 3.0, but the cumulative GPA is at or above the required minimum for satisfactory academic progress, the student receives an academic warning. This warning alerts the student to potential difficulties and to potential loss of financial aid eligibility. The student is encouraged to contact his or her academic advisor, who will assist in the development of improved study plans.

### **Academic Probation**

A student is placed on academic probation when his or her cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0. The standing of probation will be in effect for the subsequent semester with enrollment. The student is given one semester of probation to achieve the above standard, after which a student may be suspended.

For example, a student whose cumulative GPA at the end of spring semester falls below the defined standard would be assigned a standing of academic probation. If the student's next term with enrollment is the following fall semester, the standing of probation would be in effect for the duration of the fall semester. At the end of fall, the student's academic standing would be reevaluated. If the student's cumulative GPA meets the defined standard, the student would return to good standing in the subsequent term with enrollment.

### **Academic Suspension**

A student not making satisfactory academic progress may be suspended. The suspension will be in effect for the duration of the subsequent required semester. After one or more semesters have elapsed, the student may apply for readmission and, if admitted, reenter provisionally. The university may suspend any student who fails to earn a GPA of 2.0 during a semester, regardless of classification or number of hours completed.

### **Academic Dismissal**

A student not making satisfactory academic progress may be dismissed from the university. Students who are dismissed may not apply for readmission to George Fox University. The university may dismiss any student who fails to earn a GPA of 1.0 during a semester, regardless of classification or number of hours completed.

### **Provisional Admission**

A student who is admitted by exception to regular admission standards will enter with an academic standing of provisional admission. The standing will be in effect for the duration of the student's first semester after admission. If, after their first semester of enrollment, the student does not meet admission standards they may be administratively withdrawn from the university.

### **Probation Admission**

A student who is readmitted after a suspension will enter with a probationary academic standing of Probation Admission. The probation will be in effect for the duration of the student's first semester after readmission.

### **Probation and Academic Standing Appeals**

Academic actions can be appealed to the Academic Standing Committee or appropriate university authorities. This committee may repeal suspensions of students not making satisfactory academic progress when it deems the failure to be due to exceptional circumstances and judges the student has a reasonable chance to meet graduation requirements. Appeals are taken to be good faith actions that request reexamination of academic decisions. Submissions must be in writing delivered to the Office of Academic Affairs. All appeals must be made within limited time frames depending upon the action being appealed. A successful academic appeal does not necessarily result in a reinstatement of financial aid eligibility. A student who has lost aid eligibility due to insufficient satisfactory academic progress and who is wishing to appeal to have his or her financial aid reinstated must do so through the [Student Financial Services office](#).

### **Record of Academic Standing on Transcripts**

Academic standings of Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal will be recorded permanently on a student's official and unofficial transcripts, noted after the semester in which the standing was earned. Provisional Admission will appear on a student's official and unofficial transcripts upon admission or readmission but will be removed from the transcript after the completion of one semester.

The Office of Academic Affairs monitors academic offenses in conjunction with Student Life and in cases where students are violating standards in two or more classes additional penalties may be warranted.

## **3. Dismissal of a Student from the Social Work Program – Practicum Issues**

Social work is a difficult, challenging, and very rewarding profession for those interested in others and committed to serving. Professional social work requires a high level of emotional and intellectual resources, as well as an acceptance of the values and ethics of the profession. Many students find themselves initially attracted to social work for a number of reasons. Later, however, they may come to realize that they are unsuited for the profession for various reasons (e.g. their own values, academic ability, or degree of emotional strength which is often required making this career choice inappropriate for them.) Such a decision demonstrates wisdom and real caring for the needs of potential clients and co-workers. The social work faculty always stand ready to assist students in considering their best academic alternatives in such situations.

All social work students of George Fox University are expected to abide by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 2021) Code of Ethics, the Standards of Conduct as stated in the University catalog, and the Expectations and Responsibilities stated in the University Student Handbook. Along with these expectations, students enrolled in the MSW Program are expected to adhere to the following:

1. The student shall not destroy or conceal library holdings or other resources needed by others.
2. The student shall not misrepresent themselves professionally (e.g. events surrounding an incident involving professional conduct or fabrication of client data pertaining to course or practicum assignments).
3. The student shall not misrepresent their professional qualifications, education, experience, or affiliations.
4. The student shall not engage in the practice of social work while under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other chemicals.
5. The student shall not commit breaches of professional confidentiality.
6. The student shall not verbally, physically, or sexually harass, threaten, stalk, etc. patients/clients, colleagues, or supervisors.
7. The student shall not exploit professional relationships for personal gain.
8. The student shall not engage in any form of discrimination on the basis of political affiliation, race, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or physical/mental disability.
9. The student is expected to comply with the George Fox University Nondiscrimination and Diversity policies.
10. The student shall comply with the department and university wide policy on plagiarism and cheating. A copy of this can be obtained from the MSW program office.

### **3.1. Complaint Against a Student in the Social Work Practicum Education Program**

The following process is designed to resolve complaints against students, facilitate students' professional growth, and help correct unprofessional behavior when possible. As such the goal of this process is to restore students to professional functioning as deemed reasonable and possible by the faculty. An alleged violation of George Fox University policies as stated in the Graduate/DPS Student Life Policies will be handled by the appropriate office with procedures found at [www.georgefox.edu/grad-sps-policies](http://www.georgefox.edu/grad-sps-policies)

Complaints may be made against students for the following reasons:

1. Alleged violation of the NASW Code of Ethics or state law.
2. Concerns about a student's suitability for the practice of generalist social work
3. Concerns about a student's physical, intellectual, or emotional abilities to perform the essential functions of a generalist social worker.
4. Alleged violation of the MSW Program's "Criteria for possible dismissal or termination from the George Fox University Department of Social Work" found in the MSW Student Handbook and the Practicum Education Manual.

Consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics (2021), it is strongly recommended that informal resolution be the first step in resolving a conflict or concern with a student. When concerns arise, the complainant should contact the student in question and frankly discuss the concerns. If resolution is not reached, one may engage in the following formal complaint process.

A faculty member, George Fox University student, Agency Practicum Instructor, Agency Coordinator, or client may make complaints. Because of the nature of a formal complaint, the confidentiality of the complainant cannot be maintained. A complainant must be willing to submit the complaint(s) in writing and be interviewed by the appropriate parties. Written



documentation of the complaint and outcome are kept in the student's permanent file.

Complaints against students will be handled in the following manner:

1. Complaints against a MSW student must be written, signed, dated and sent to the MSW Program Director.
  - a. If the complaint is practicum related, a copy of the complaint is also sent to the MSW Director of Practicum Education by the complainant.
2. Within three working days of receipt of the complaint, the MSW Program Director sends the written complaint to the MSW Academic and Performance Committee
3. Within three working days of the received complaint from the MSW director, the MSW Academic and Performance Committee Chair notifies the MSW student that a complaint(s) has been made, why the issue is concerning, and the nature of the complaint (a brief summary of the complaint).
4. The MSW student may be told they may not return to their practicum placement until this complaint process is complete. If this is the case, the Chair of the Committee needs to notify the Director of Practicum Education, and they need to notify the student, the Practicum Faculty, and the Agency Practicum Instructor.
5. Within 15 business days, the MSW Academic and Performance Committee gathers necessary information from faculty, concerned MSW students, Agency Practicum Instructors, agency coordinators, the client (if necessary and relevant), and MSW student whom the complaint is about.
  - a. The Committee obtains additional information and the MSW student's response to the allegations.
  - b. The student may offer the Committee names of persons who may provide information on behalf of the student.
  - c. This is not a litigious process, and attorneys cannot be involved at this level.
6. Within 5 working days of the student interview, the MSW Academic and Performance Committee recommends a decision to the Social Work Program faculty. Possible recommendations include:
  - a. Dismiss the complaint
  - b. Letter of reprimand to the MSW student
  - c. Remedial actions without probation. The student must submit documentation of satisfaction with remedial recommendations by a specific date. The student will be informed in writing of what he/she must do to be reinstated to good standing. Remedial actions may include, but are not limited to, mandatory counseling, additional courses, additional practicum experience, or additional supervision.
  - d. Remedial actions as above with probation. Probation implies on-going monitoring of the student's functioning by the Academic and Performance Committee, or its representative, for a length of time determined appropriate by the Committee.
  - e. Dismissal from the GFU MSW Program.
7. Within 2 business days of the presentation to the MSW faculty, the Chair of the committee notifies the student of the final decision, in writing.
8. The MSW Program Director notifies the MSW Director of Practicum Education, the Agency Practicum Instructor, agency coordinator, and GFU Academic Affairs of the faculty decision.
9. If the MSW student is dismissed from the GFU MSW Program, they may not continue in the practicum experience and lose credit for the current semester. In addition, they cannot reapply to the GFU MSW Program for six months following the dismissal action unless an

appeal reverses the decision of the faculty.

### **3.2 Complaint Appeal Process**

Decisions by the faculty that come through the student complaint process can be appealed. In the event of an appeal, the following process must be followed:

1. The student makes a written appeal to the MSW Program Director within 10 working days of receipt of the faculty decision. Copies of the appeal may be sent to the MSW Director of Practicum Education and the Dean of Behavioral Health Science by the MSW program director.

2. The MSW Program Director appoints an ad hoc committee composed of three faculty members, at least one of which must be from the GFU MSW Program, to review the appeal and the faculty decision.

3. The ad hoc committee investigates the decision to the extent the committee believes it is necessary, which may include interviews of the student and those involved in the complaint.

4. The ad hoc committee makes a decision to support, modify, or overturn the faculty decision within 30 working days of receipt of the appeal. Written notification is provided to the student, MSW Program Director, MSW Director of Practicum Education, the Agency Practicum Instructor, agency contact, the student's GFU MSW Practicum Faculty, and the Dean of Behavioral Health Science. The decision of the ad hoc appeal committee is final.

## **4. Reasons for Suspension/Dismissal - Academic Issues**

Reasons for suspension or dismissal may include the following:

1. Failure to meet or maintain academic grade point requirement as established by George Fox University and the MSW Program. Students who are on academic probation for two consecutive semesters without achieving a 3.0 GPA must step out of the program. At least one semester (not including winter or summer) must elapse before reapplying.
2. Behavior judged to be in violation of the NASW Code of Ethics.
3. Evidence of academic cheating, lying, or plagiarism.
4. Behavioral disturbances that, in the professional judgment of the Social Work faculty and the committee charged with reviewing such issues, could impair quality provision of services to clients while enrolled and functioning in GFU's MSW Program. (An example is the student's inability to show insight to one's own behavior and receive feedback.)
5. Evidence of current illegal drug or alcohol dependency documented as occurring during the course of study in George Fox University's MSW program.
6. Documented evidence of criminal activity occurring while enrolled and functioning in GFU's MSW Program that could impair quality provision of services to clients.
7. Submitting false or misleading information as a part of the application process. Suspension or dismissal means a student will no longer be enrolled in the MSW program.

## **5. Student Complaints Against Social Work Program Faculty**

Other faculty members, staff or students may make complaints against faculty members. Complaints must be written, signed, dated, and sent to the Dean of the Wellness Enterprise with

a copy sent to the Director of the Master of Social Work Program.

## **Students' Rights, Responsibilities, and Policies**

Students have the right and the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of their educational experience. The Social Work Program implements this opportunity through a variety of mechanisms. Each semester students have the opportunity to provide feedback to the university, via evaluation forms, on the quality of the instruction received in most every course. To ensure greater candor, the results of student evaluations of faculty are not shared with faculty until after grades have been turned in for that semester. The results are maintained in a confidential manner. Students also have the opportunity to evaluate the program through the SWEAP Exit Survey.

### **Student Organizations**

Social work students, in accordance with George Fox University policy, have the right to organize in their own interests in matters concerning academic and student affairs. Students may elect to join the "Association of Student Social Workers" in order to pursue those interests and concerns.

At the MSW program level, students may elect to participate as a MSW student representative. MSW Student Representatives facilitate communication between the students and faculty to advocate for constructive change within the program. Membership of the organization will always consist of at least one student from the generalist cohort and at least one student from the advanced generalist cohort. The representatives are selected by the class and approved by a majority vote of the class. Every year, student representatives organize and plan student engagement events which are offered to all MSW students.

MSW Representatives strive to:

- Equally and respectfully represent the views of classmates to the faculty.
- Actively serve as a liaison between the class and faculty by empowering each other in the spirit of collaboration.
- Recognize strengths of the program and make suggestions for positive changes to the curriculum, administration of the curriculum and other aspects of the program such as lecture or testing techniques identified by the students.
- Help carry forward other program issues identified by the class to the faculty as indicated through either regular class meetings or impromptu meetings called by general consensus of the class.
- Carefully represent the views of the class, not only personal views.

### **Student Educational Files**

All educational records of George Fox University students are maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. More information about how the university protects student's files and privacy could be found here: [FERPA Privacy Rights](#). Students may refer related questions to the George Fox University Student Life office.

## **Children on Campus Policy**

The following policy related to children on campus is intended to apply to regular, daily, or prolonged presence of children in the MSW program. The guidelines seek to protect the safety of children in the building during work and school hours and the professional work environment required to conduct University business.

The MSW program is an educational and employment setting. Due to our nature and purpose, it is generally not in the child's best interest to be unattended in this environment. No childcare services are available at the Portland center campus. Children may not attend MSW classes with enrolled students nor be in the classroom during scheduled class times unless they are present for a specific activity in the classroom at the invitation of the instructor. The discussion of topics may not always be appropriate for young children present in the classroom. We acknowledge that emergencies and other situations may occur that are difficult to control. When your children are ill or out of school for another reason, please take the time to make arrangements to have them supervised in an appropriate setting.

## **Writing Policy**

The George Fox University Social Work Program is strongly committed to ensuring that graduates receiving a social work degree possess competent writing skills. Writing in the social work profession is an issue of ethical responsibility to clients, agency stakeholders and fiduciary commitments. As such, academic writing is the foundation in which professional writing is honed. To that end, it is program policy that:

1. All social work courses will contain assignments requiring students to engage in writing. This may include research papers, article reviews, journals, essay test questions or any other assignment that allows the student the opportunity to demonstrate an appropriate level of writing skill.
2. Correct grammar, punctuation, syntax, organization, and clarity of content, etc. will be one criterion used for grading all writing assignments within social work courses including essay examinations.
3. Students may be referred to university resources to assist in improving writing skills. The university provides writing assistance through the [Virtual Learning Center](#).
4. APA writing style is required by the program. APA learning workshops are offered by the Academic Resource Center and are available online.

## **Student Support & Other Resources**

### **George Fox University Disability and Accessibility Services**

[Disability & Accessibility Services \(DAS\)](#) provides certain services for students with disabilities. Upon receipt of a request for services and the appropriate documentation, DAS works with students to provide or establish the most suitable and reasonable accommodations or services given the context of a particular class or area of campus.

Contacts: Rick Muthiah - [rmuthia@georgefox.edu](mailto:rmuthia@georgefox.edu)

## **Student Health and Counseling Services**

The [Health and Counseling Center](#) is dedicated to helping students stay healthy so they can achieve the highest personal growth and intellectual success during their time at George Fox. Health and counseling services are available to all students at the university, and all services are provided on the Newberg campus.

## **George Fox University Title IX Resources**

The [George Fox Campus Awareness, Response and Education \(CARE\)](#) team's purpose is to lead and support our campus in pursuit of being a Christ-centered community that fosters a safe living, learning and work setting for students, employees, and visitors free of harassment, discrimination and violence.

## **Portland Center Lactation Room**

The lactation room is equipped with two stations, baby changing pad, fridge, microwave, water, and other nursing supplies. Request the access code from the MSW Program Coordinator.

## **Other Resources**

Council on Social Work Education  
(CSWE) <http://www.cswe.org>

George Fox University MSW Field Manual  
<http://www.georgefox.edu/social-work/current-students.html>

International Federation of Social  
Workers <http://ifsw.org>

National Association of Social Workers  
(NASW) <http://www.naswdc.org>

North American Association of Christians in Social Work  
(NACSW) <http://www.nacsw.org>

State of Oregon: Board of Licensed Social  
Workers <http://www.oregon.gov/BLSW>

George Fox University Leave of Absence (LOA) Procedures  
<http://www.georgefox.edu/catalog/handbook/academic/enrollment/loa.html>

\*Note: Any LOA should be communicated to the student's academic advisor and/or program director when appropriate.

## MSW Student Acknowledgement Form

I acknowledge that I have been provided a copy (or provided the virtual link) to the:

- Master of Social Work Student Handbook
- Master of Social Work Practicum Education Manual
- The Code of Ethics of The National Association of of Social Workers (NASW)

In addition, I understand that I am expected to read and abide by the NASW Code of Ethics, all George Fox University policies, including the policy on Academic Honesty, which can be found online at: <https://www.georgefox.edu/catalog/handbook/academic/standing/honesty.html>.

I further acknowledge that I am expected to read through the above material, understand it and be familiar with what is expected of me, and that failure to do so may result in student review or additional corrective action, leading up to dismissal from the program.

I understand that this material will be updated from time to time and that I am responsible for reading and understanding the updates. Material will be provided to me initially at MSW Student Orientation and will again be provided to me in Practicum Seminar Course assignments.

As a student in the Master of Social Work Program, my signature below signifies that I agree to adhere to and comply with the Master of Social Work Student Handbook, Master of Social Work Field Manual, the George Fox University Policy on Academic Honesty and the NASW Code of Ethics.

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Print Name

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Signature

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Date